

THE EFFECTS OF COLLABORATIVE GAMES IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO STUDENTS

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to look into the effects of collaborative games in teaching the English language to students based on the teacher-made instructional materials for Grade 9 students, administered in the experimental group. This study applied a quasi-experimental design wherein two (2) sections of Grade 9 students were involved in the conduct of this study whereas one (1) section made use of the developed intervention (experimental) and the other section employed the lecture-discussion method (control). The pretest yielded that students did not meet expectations or had a poor understanding of verbals and literary devices as the lesson objectives; therefore, contextualized collaborative games were made to improve their learning on the topics. Moreover, after the implementation of the intervention in the experimental group, it was found out that the developed instructional materials were effective and created learning improvement in students' conceptual understanding regarding verbals and literary devices. Thus, the principles of a game-based type of activities or lessons can be an effective strategy in teaching the English language especially to academically challenged learners.

Keywords: *Collaborative Games, Contextualization, Effect, Intervention, 21st Century Skills*

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of the Philippine Education System has evolved into a higher level of expectation because of the advent of Globalization. This is a big challenge for both teachers and students to be globally competitive individuals as they deal with the demands and expectations of the world. To be able to survive, one must be equipped with basic skills that he or she can use upon completing a certain task. That is, skills must be taught thoroughly among students, especially the 21st Century Learners. The 21st-century skills are a set of abilities that students need to develop in order to succeed in the information age. Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Collaborating, and Communicating are the skills that the students must learn after being taught the different concepts inside the classroom (Stauffer, 2022).

Many teachers of the Department of Education (DepEd), specifically those who are assigned to far-flung areas, find difficulty in developing the skills of their students due to the lack of technology. Thus, this study aimed to give them an idea of how to address this predicament by making the class an interactive one.

The span of students' attention during this time is deteriorating. Many researchers and psychologists suggested that students only have an attention span of 10 minutes. So, many lecturers follow the so-called "10-Minute Rule." They believe that the span of attention of the audience is between 7-10 minutes (Richardson, 2012). Therefore; teachers must be able to get

the students' attention after the span of 10 minutes. So, contextualized Collaborative Games will be very helpful in addressing this need, so that students will be more engaged, encouraged, and motivated to participate in classroom discussions.

Collaboration is a joint effort of multiple individuals or work groups to accomplish a task or project. The idea of utilizing games to engage students in the process of active learning is no longer new to them (TechTarget Contributor, n.d.). For several years now, teachers have been incorporating manifold games into their lessons to be able to make a fun, entertaining, and engaging classroom environment. Most of the teachers consider this as a very challenging task since some games are time-consuming but on the positive side, it could be interactive, collaborative, and competitive which will definitely boost the confidence and participation of the students. Some students learn more when they are competing in a game or activity while others seem like they are uninterested or possibly distracted. Games are defined as representations of real situations in which the issues are quite simply drawn and the participants can become engaged without any confusion. The basic function of games is to intensify human experiences in ways that are relatively safe. The theory of games might be called the mathematics of competition and cooperation. It analyzes situations in terms of the gains and losses of opposing players. They are applied in various aspects of life and different periods of study such as economics, mathematics, science, and language (Wright, et. al. 2005).

Teaching English to school children is not an easy job; it requires a lot of work and preparation. Language learning is hard work; effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period of time. This is to note that when the teacher wants to develop a game, he or she must make sure that all the materials are readily available within the environment. The teacher needs to use his or her power of creativity in making games or other instructional materials. In addition, the power of games and play facilitates deep and meaningful learning where most productive and motivating learning experiences are taking place outside of school through playing and participation where students do enjoy learning via having a sense of their own progression and where the learning is relevant and appropriate.

A question of method is not the only way in teaching English successfully. The best instruction may fail because personal diversity and needs are unaddressed; thus, it is significant to look for reasons behind their inactiveness which could be due to a lack of fun and interest. In developing the game, it needs to assess first the learning needs of the students. Contextualization is one key factor to address this situation so that the students could appreciate and relate to the context.

Teachers are able to drive students to learn the language and to sustain their interest in language learning if they can offer activities that are communicative, enjoyable, safe, and non-threatening as well as group-based, meaningful, and challenging. Such activities help promote self-confidence, learning satisfaction, and good relationship among learners and

between teachers and students (Orlick, 2006). Language learning is very hard and effort are required over a long period of time. Games help the teacher to create contexts in which language is useful and meaningful, therefore; they help and encourage students to sustain their interest and work (Wright, et. al. 2005). Well-chosen games are valuable highly motivating, amusing, and challenging and they encourage cooperation as they give students a break and at the same time allow students to practice language skills (Ersoz, 2000).

Furthermore, games can lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of a second language more likely. Second, they are highly motivating and entertaining and they can give shy students the opportunity to express their opinions and feelings. Finally, games enable students to acquire new experiences within a foreign language and add diversion to regular classroom activities. Thus, creating a relaxed atmosphere in which students remember things faster and better (McFarlane and Sakellariou, 2002). Therefore, the concept of cooperative, competitive, and communicative games are some of the most important ways to teach language efficiently. However, the usage of the game in the teaching-learning process must be done by a number of rules. There must be a sense of immediate gratification for the learners. It must be easily understood. There must be an understandable relationship between the game and the content of the lesson. A game should be appropriate for the entire class to play at one time. A game should be intellectually challenging and should leave participants feeling that they have had to work to achieve success. A game should be placed in the correct sequence in the lesson. A game must have an objective. This objective can be something like making points for the correctness or finishing an activity first. Sometimes the game is conducted by the teacher who acts as judge, scorer, and/or referee. A game should be as non-intrusive as possible. The game must complement the lesson rather than overshadow it (Lengelling, 1997).

It, therefore, hoped that the proponent could develop Collaborative Games on how to effectively teach the English language. Thus, it will be a value-added instructional material in developing students understanding of concepts in learning English discipline. This study was motivated by the need to determine the effect of Collaborative Games that could provide contextualized knowledge in understanding language. This study was implemented at Lacag National High School, Daraga Albay under the management of the Schools Division of Albay since this is one of the schools which has low performance in the succeeding National Achievement Tests in English. For the past three years, Lacag NHS got a score of **47.03** last 2012 – 2013; **48.18** last 2013 – 2014, and **37.49** last 2014 and 2015 which merely confirms the need to elevate students' understanding of English

METHODOLOGY

The researcher applied Quasi-experimental and Descriptive methods of research. As stated by Helmstander, descriptive research uses survey instruments and questionnaires to conduct measurements from the identified respondents. On the other hand, the treatment or stimulus in Quasi-experimental is administered to only one of two groups whose members were randomly assigned – are considered the gold standard in assessing causal hypotheses.

This study involved Qualitative and Quantitative analysis of Data. The Quantitative data were derived from the Pre – Test and Post – Test results while the Qualitative data were obtained from the two (2) Focused Group Discussions (FGD), students’ journals and teacher observation checklists. The Pre – Test was not used as a basis for conceptualizing the Collaborative Games. Further, the Collaborative Games were made to determine whether the use of it has an effect or not.

There were mainly eighty-five (85) respondents in this study where forty-two (42) respondents came from Grade 9 – Newton (Experimental group) and forty-three (43) respondents from Grade 9 – Pythagoras (Controlled group). The Collaborative Games Intervention was implemented and executed among Grade 9 – Newton students while the Lecture – discussion type of instruction was implemented in the Grade 9 – Pythagoras section. The reason why Grade 9 Newton was chosen as the sample population of this study is because they have a lower performance in English wherein their average mean rating for the first quarter was 81.826 while the mean rating of Grade 9 Pythagoras was 83.271. The English Grades were obtained from the records of Grade 9 English Teachers.

Furthermore, two (2) Grade 9 English teachers had also been part of the data-gathering procedure. They were involved in the Focused Group Discussions to answer the present strengths and weaknesses of the Grade 9 students and other sub-questions.

In this study, the researcher used four (4) kinds of instruments such as Pre – Test and Post – Test Questions, Test Validity Rubric, Collaborative Games Evaluation Checklist, and Students’ Journals.

The Pre – Test and Post – Test scores were used in identifying the students’ present strengths and weaknesses in Verbals and Literary Devices (*Figures of Speech*). In addition, this was also used in determining the effect of the teacher–made Collaborative Games in teaching language among Grade 9 students. On the other hand, the Test Validity Rubric was used to evaluate the validity of the tests. The evaluators evaluated if all of the indicators were really found in the test made by the researcher.

Furthermore, the Collaborative Games Evaluation Checklist was used to evaluate the features of the teacher–made Collaborative Games. All of the features were made present in the Collaborative Games. Lastly, the Students’ Journal was used in determining the effect of the Collaborative games wherein these data are in descriptive form.

In the interpretation of the data gathered, the researcher used the measures mean rating from the administered Pre – Test of the two (2) groups (*experimental and controlled*) to identify the present strengths and weaknesses of Grade 9 students. Here are the levels and descriptors in identifying the proficiency of Grade 9 students in understanding verbals and literary devices:

Table 1. Percentage and Adjectival Rating to Identify Learner’s Proficiency Level

Percentage	Adjectival Rating
90% - 100%	Outstanding
85% - 87%	Very Satisfactory
80% - 84%	Satisfactory
75% - 79%	Fairly Satisfactory
Below 75%	Did not meet expectations

RESULTS/FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Proficiency of Grade 9 Students

The level of proficiency of Grade 9 students was identified and gathered through pre-survey interviews with selected students and Grade 9 English teachers. The scale and range in identifying students' proficiency were anchored on the standard set by the Department of Education (DepEd). This sought to measure students' understanding between the two (2) learning competencies anchored on the K to 12 Grade 9 Curriculum Guide such as the use of verbals and figures of speech.

Grammar Awareness. The result showed that the Grade 9 students are not yet proficient in understanding verbals as part of the topics embedded in the K to 12 Curriculum Guide. The Grade 9 Pythagoras obtained a mean rating of 7.33 while the Grade 9 Newton got a meaning rating of 9.81. Based on the result, it yielded that they were not able to meet the expected mean rating which is half of 30 as the total number of items in the pretest. Grade 9 Newton has 32.70% as their level of proficiency equating to did not meet expectation, the same with Grade 9 Pythagoras.

During the pre-survey interview, student's level of understanding regarding grammar awareness is average according to 15 students out of 19 respondents. According to them, they have not yet fully understood these concepts because they do not like writing as it is considered as boring. Teachers shared that the main reason why they cannot follow the rules is that there are a lot of functions to be familiarized and they seemingly focus more on the substance of the lesson or content rather than grammar rules.

Writing and Composition Awareness. Similar to Grammar Awareness competency, both classes, Grade 9 Newton and 9-Pythagoras received a mark of not proficient. Out of 20-item questions, Grade 9 Newton obtained a mean rating of 6.52 while Grade 9 Pythagoras received a mean rating of 5.69. Respectively, they got a mean percentage of 32.62% and 28.45% equivalent to an adjectival rating of did not meet expectations. Pre-survey interviews revealed that they lack vocabulary and interest in writing attributed to the poor result of students. Simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole (common figures of speech used)

are just some of the familiar literary devices that they know. They find figures of speech not useful because this is not being used in day-to-day contexts and activities.

Combining both ratings in the two (2) learning competencies, Grade 9 Newton and Grade 9 Pythagoras, **respectively**, got a mean rating of 32.62% and 26.52% equivalent to an adjectival rating of did not meet expectations.

Features of the teacher-made Collaborative Games in Teaching the English Language to Grade 9 Students

In **consideration** of the pretest results of Grade 9 students on the two (2) learning competencies (Verbals and Literary Devices, the researchers came up with contextualized collaborative games to be able to address and improve the learning of the students. The materials, which is a learning kit, feature contextualization, student-centeredness, goal direction, active learning, 21st-century skills, rules, and practical learning.

Through the contextualization, students felt connected to the games and they easily understood the concepts. The games were also transferrable in different contexts and different classroom environments. The context relevance of these games was highly evident since it is anchored on the present interests of the students as the infusion of the present trends were applied such as DOTA, Anime, Amazing Race, Chain Poem Game, and Yo-gi Oh Cards.

The games are learner-centered and promoted active collaboration among the players which has really been evident in all of the games made. This allowed learners to move, share and brainstorm about their answers.

Furthermore, to secure the appropriateness of these games, objectives were anchored on the standard learning competency which is the K to 12 Curriculum Guide of the Department of Education. The members of each group have shared goals also to force players to work together within a single quest with a predefined goal. The context gave them already the condition and objectives to win the game.

The players had different character roles to complement each other's activities within the game. This allowed one character type to assist or change the abilities of another. It encouraged academically challenged students to participate and learn and boost one's confidence to be able to cooperate together through synchronized goals.

Moreover, the games allowed students to use their communication skills, creative thinking, critical thinking, and collaboration skills as they involved the components of collaboration such as interpersonal collaborative skills, face-to-face interaction, beneficial interdependence, individual responsibility, and group interaction processing (Pappas, 2014).

It likewise followed the formal basic elements of games such as players, objectives, procedures, rules, resources, conflicts, boundaries, and outcomes (Nacke, 2014), evidently embedded in the mechanics of the package to have decorum and order.

Finally, the games were balanced in the sense that they accommodated different player levels and provided practical learning among the students. This allowed them to apply concepts they have learned while they enjoy playing the games. This could be evident in Games 1: Meet and Greet Otako Fever; Game 2: Run for your Fan; Game 3: First Blood Double Kill.

Effects of the teacher-made Collaborative Games in Teaching the English Language to Students

The effect of the teacher-made Collaborative Games was measured through pretest and posttest, mean and standard deviation, and effect size results, focusing on the K to 12 Grade 9 learning competencies such as Grammar Awareness and Writing and Composition Awareness. This was also supported by students’ narratives through journals, particularly on their intellectual understanding and growth. The Grade 9-Newton served as the experimental group which made use of the study’s proposed intervention while 9 Pythagoras was the study’s control group which followed the lecture-discussion type of instruction.

Using the effect size formula by Fraenkel et. al. (2013), the computation revealed the result of 13.24 showing an important finding because it exceeded 0.50 as the parameter in identifying the effect of the intervention. Most researchers consider that any effect size of .50 (that is, half a standard deviation of the comparison group’s score) or larger is an important finding. Thus, the result implied that the intervention is effective.

Table 2. Effect of Collaborative Games Based on Pretest and Posttest of Grade 9 Students

9-Newton (Experimental)	Pretest	Posttest	Gain	9-Pythagoras (Control)	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
Mean	16.31	31.02	14.71	Mean	13.21	21.84	8.63
Standard Deviation	5.59	6.52	4.22	Standard Deviation	4.33	7.35	5.87

Based on the table, it can be gleaned that there has been an evident gain and improvement in the posttest scores of the students compared to their scores in the pretest, an indication that the teacher-made collaborative games have made a positive effect on the

performance, particularly in understanding verbal and literary devices. It can be supported by the narratives of the students based on their journals documenting students' feedback and experience with regard to the game being played. Their views are important to be captured since they were the direct users of the teacher-made interventions:

"And also there's a lot of knowledge that I learned so much"

"Overall, I can say that we enjoyed the games and we acquired many knowledge about gerund"

"I am so very happy today because I gain knowledge and I enjoy the game"

"I feel happy because we won the game and we've learned a lesson"

"I'm very happy because we enjoy and we acquire a knowledge in this activity"

"The experience today we discuss the figures of speech and I understand the lesson"

"We acquired many knowledge about the figures of speech"

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was derived that the level of proficiency of Grade 9 students with regard to verbal and literary devices was not proficient since the posttest results indicated the level did not meet expectations, being the lowest proficiency level indicator. Furthermore, the effect of the teacher-made Collaborative Games interventions was statistically significant; thus, can highly improve the learning of students specifically in teaching the English Language. It can be observed that conducting an experimental study such as this becomes an avenue to improving teacher's pedagogical and andragogical practices to become relevant in the body of knowledge and in teaching English in particular. Validity and reliability assure the quality of learning and teaching process, not just in English but can also be applied across the subject areas. This is something that should be considered by curriculum developers in the 21st and 22nd centuries; that students' needs and interests should always be considered in the instruction.

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